



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3010420
Applicant Name: Rumi Takahashi, Weinstein AU for the Compass Center
Address of Proposal: 1753 NW 56th Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a seven-story building containing 80 low-income elderly and low income disabled residential units above two floors of office and medical services uses. Parking for 13 vehicles will be provided within the structure. Review includes 777 cu. yds. of grading.

The following Master Use Permit components are required:

Design Review – Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.41 with Development Standard Departures:

1. Parking Aisle Width (SMC 23.54.030.E)
2. Parking Stall Size Ratio (SMC 23.54.030.B)
3. Garbage Service Access Width (SMC 23.54.029)

SEPA Environmental Review - Seattle Municipal Code Section 25.05

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☒ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

SITE AND VICINITY

The 9,492 sf site is located on a lot one-half block north of Ballard's commercial corridor along Market Street. The property is currently vacant and is bordered by NW 56th Street to the north and an alley to the south. The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial with an 85-foot height limit (NC3-85). The site is located within the Ballard Hub Urban Village and is just outside the Ballard Municipal Center boundaries. The site does not contain City-defined Environmentally Critical Areas, nor is it subject to Neighborhood Specific Guidelines.



Across the street to the north, the zone changes to Neighborhood Commercial with a 65-foot height limit. Market Street (one-half block south of the site) is the commercial spine of the Ballard neighborhood and demarcates the northern edge of the commercial center of Ballard from the more residential areas to the north. Market Street is dominated by one and two story retail and commercial structures. Historic residential development has been low-rise multifamily and single family, mostly north of Market Street. Recent residential development has been 65 to 85 foot height mixed use; these recent projects can be found on both sides of Market Street, and are clustered along 17th Avenue NW and 24th Avenue NW.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal includes the construction of a seven-story building containing 80 low-income elderly and low income disabled residential units above two floors of office (6,276 sq. ft.) and medical services (1,484 sq. ft.) uses. Parking for 13 vehicles will be provided within the structure. Review includes 777 cu. yds. of grading. Access to the site is proposed from the alley.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Approximately 15 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting held on February 8, 2010. The following comments were offered:

- Concern with the safety of the alley and potential for loitering. Would like to see alley well designed and lit to discourage unsafe behaviors and/or loitering.
- Applaud proposed green roof design concept.
- Concern with the nature of the future tenants of the proposed project.
- Concern that proposed structure will block views and cause shadows on nearby residences.
- Concern that the wireless antennas on the rooftop of the Landmark apartment building will be affected by the proposed development.
- Would like to see a building design that includes texture and modulation on the side elevations. Supportive of a modern design.
- Interested in a more varied sidewalk design to provide greater interest to the pedestrian.
- Support for the proposed development and services provided. Supportive of Option C.
- Concern that the rooftop deck be designed with safety in mind.
- Clarification of the proposed unit sizes and development standards (including FAR).
- Suggest street trees provide edible fruit.
- Concern with the maintenance of green roof.
- Clarification of the residential program.

The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit on April 14, 2010. Notice of Application was published on April 22, 2010 and a 14-day comment period ended on May 5, 2010 and was extended to May 19, 2010. Approximately 130 letters were received and the following comments and sentiments were offered:

- Request to be a Party of Record.
- Concern that the proposed development will increase the homeless population in the neighborhood,
- Parking congestion is a current problem. Concern that traffic impacts from the building will be great.
- The character of the street is more residential in nature and the proposed building does not have a residential feel and belongs on a commercial zone. Building design should more residential in character.
- Improper location of this type of facility in this neighborhood.
- Oppose monolithic facility housing individuals with medical, mental health and substance abuse problems because it will overburden and be unsafe to the community and increase parking congestion.
- Proposed building is too tall and massive for the neighborhood and out of scale.
- Concern that the future tenants will not meet the definition of low-income elderly housing.
- Concern that that the project does not provide the required parking.
- Concern that the future tenants will include registered sex offenders.
- Would like to see an Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the proposed development.
- Building appears too institutional and needs more modulation.
- The future tenants will cause noise, drug activity, loitering, littering, panhandling, crime, public drinking and urination to increase in the neighborhood. Detrimental to businesses and neighbors.
- Project incorrectly identified as low-income housing; should instead be homeless housing.
- Concern that the alley abutting the site is too narrow and will create circulation issues for the businesses on the opposite side of the alley.
- Project will increase the indigent and homeless population of Ballard.
- Believe the proposed use should be considered an institutional use.
- Support for the Compass Center as a responsible organization that cares for their tenants and buildings. Believes the subject site is an appropriate location for such a project. Confident that the proposed development will enhance the neighborhood.
- Compass Center should provide greater security at the alley and building perimeter.
- Proposed use is needed, but on a smaller scale.
- Proposed will offer stable, permanent housing allowing formerly homeless people to change their lives.
- More affordable housing is needed.
- Believe that property values will decline as a result of this project.
- Important to create safe housing to get people off the streets. Important resource for the neighborhood.
- Support the generous setbacks along the street, generous landscaping and proposed material palette for its durability. Pleased that the proposed building height is less than the Code allows. Architect and owner should be commended.
- Questions about city process.
- Future tenants should be supervised.
- Concern that air quality will be adversely impacts from kitchen ventilation, environmental health will be jeopardized by drug use of future tenants.
- The proposed use should be approached with compassion.
- Compass Center brings a desired diversity to the community.

- Support the housing for the homeless as well as the medical and mental services that will be located in the same building.
- Support the proposed housing.
- Communication with the community should be more transparent.
- Support for the proposed design, massing, streetscape compatibility, materials and program as beneficial to the community.

A SEPA Public Meeting was held on June 14, 2010. Approximately 100 members of the public attended and the following comments were received:

- Concern about people coming to this neighborhood from outside areas.
- Concern that residential parking will be reduced.
- Would like to see a full environmental review completed, especially with regard to emergency services and tax revenue impacts.
- Concern that the proposed project will create parking and traffic safety issues.
- Clarification of the definition of housing for chronically homeless.
- Concern with the site selection criteria for the proposed uses.
- Question whether this is a mixed use or single use project.
- Would like to know the staff numbers, visiting hours and kitchen operation details for the proposed uses.
- Support for the proposed uses.
- Question the prospect of sex offenders living in the proposed building and what level sex offender would be allowed.
- Loss of existing housing can be gained back with the proposed project.
- This project is precedent-setting and should be located on the outskirts of the neighborhood, not in the central area.
- The proposed project will not have a significant impact on the community, based on other projects by the same organization.
- Better services are needed for low-income groups.
- Application materials are inconsistent.
- An EIS should be required.
- The human services element of the neighborhood plan is not adequate in terms of service provisions.
- Need to help get the homeless off the streets.
- Citing case studies of similar projects.
- Impact to police services needs to be examined.
- Should give higher priority to Ballard homeless people.
- Looking forward to welcoming the Compass Center into the community.

Approximately 100 members of the public attended the Final Recommendation meeting on June 14, 2010. The following comments were offered:

- The building massing is overdone and is not considerate of neighbors; the corners should be cut back to reduce the impression of mass. The proposed access from the alley is questionable given the narrow width of the alley.
- The parking calculations have not been done correctly.
- The proposed design does not relate to surrounding buildings since there is no modulation or balconies. The front entry area should not include a seat wall.
- Suggest that the design consider integration of the Norwegian style of textile art called “Urness” to give more neighborhood flavor to the building.

- The green deck should be accessible. The plating strip should be continuous to accommodate street trees. Pleased that the garbage collection area is located within the building. Feels that the departure requests are minimal.
- Would like to see larger unit sizes. Clarification of the parapet height and that ventilation is directed through the roof.
- Clarification that bike parking will be provided.
- The alley is too narrow to accommodate garbage trucks.
- It is likely that smokers will congregate near the building entrance.
- There are no parking problems in this neighborhood.
- The planting strip design should include a more convenient door swing area for those cars parking along the curb.

ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW

Design Guidance

Three schemes were presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting. All of the options include parking accessed from the alley.

The high voltage power lines located in the sidewalk in front of the subject site require an upper level setback. The three options below respond to this condition by setting back the upper floors (as shown in Option A) to accommodate the clearance area or by setting back the entire building (shown in Options B and C).

The first scheme (Option A) proposes a building that meets the street front for the first two stories and then sets back at the upper level. The building at the upper levels is a U-shape with the open space at the third level configured to the open towards the south (the alley). No departures would be needed for this alternative.

The second alternative (Option B) proposes a C-shaped building with the upper level courtyard facing to the west. The front (north) building façade would generally be one plane and extend to the ground at a setback distance from the sidewalk. This alternative includes departures from the driveway widths and parking stall dimensions.

The third and preferred scheme (Option C) shows an H-shaped massing configuration with notches that face to the east and the west. The front façade is similar to that of Option 2 that is composed of a setback building face. This alternative includes departures from the driveway widths and parking stall dimensions, as well as street level façade, street level use depth and street level use height.

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the *City of Seattle's Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the design had evolved in response to the guidance provided at the earlier meeting. The design presentations included colored elevations, renderings, floor plans, material and color board, as well as a more detailed explanation of the four proposed departures. The building mass is H-shaped with vertical light wells along the east and west facades. The two story building base is glassy and transparent, while the upper residential levels are a solid material with a symmetrical fenestration pattern. Open spaces and landscaped areas are provided along the sidewalk, at the entry area, a deck area at the second level of the south elevation, on the roof level, within the base of the vertical notches and at the base of the east and west facades.

Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

As described in greater detail in A-4, the Board was supportive of a two story commercial base concept that would emphasize the commercial character. The Board also indicated support for this base to be highly glazed.

The Board would like to see overhead weather protection provided at the building entry, not over the vegetated setback area.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board was pleased with the overhead canopy provided at the building entry area. They agreed the design, signage and location were appropriate.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

The design proposed a departure from the 13-foot commercial height standard and the Board agreed that the critical consideration is the experience from the pedestrian level and the sense of a strong commercial base. The Board supported the design concept of expressing the first two floors as a commercial base. This two story volume should have a more commercial character while the upper levels will be residential both in function and appearance. See also A-3.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board was supportive of the design of the two-story building base that is an aluminum storefront window system that is typical of more commercial uses.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

The Board would like to see further detail about the solar and shadow impacts from the proposed structure on adjacent sites. The Board would also like to see more detail regarding the viability and programming of the proposed open spaces at ground level, third floor and rooftop.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board reviewed a shadow study and concluded that the shadow impacts from the proposed building are within the anticipated impacts for a building within this zoning designation and in fact are less than typical due to the setback on the north side.

The Board recommended that architectural details be integrated at the ground level, that reference the Scandinavian neighborhood history or character. These details should be visible to the pedestrian and provide visual interest. The Board would like to see further exploration of the ‘Urness’ style of Norwegian textile design or other Scandinavian/Nordic cultural reference to be incorporated into the design.

The Board was also very please with the proposed green roof design which will an amenity to the neighborhood by collecting storm water runoff in a low-impact manner.

A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating useable, attractive and well-integrated open space.

The Board discussed at length the setback area between the sidewalk and the building face of the preferred option. The Board agreed this space should offer a nice public amenity for the pedestrian environment and should be well landscaped and contributes to a welcoming entry area. All of the proposed open spaces should be well considered and programmed and presented at the next meeting.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board agreed that the proposed landscape plan for the right-of-way, setback and entry areas are generously vegetated provides visual interest to the pedestrian environment and creates a welcoming entry space. See also E-2.

Height, Bulk, and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

The Board agreed that the Option C is the preferred alternative in terms of open space and more potential for variations of the facades. They did note a concern with this concept if the sites to both the east and west are redeveloped, then the proposed modulation will no longer be visible and the proposed open spaces no longer as viable with regard to light access. The Board agreed that setting the entire building back at the ground floors to match the required clearance area required at the upper levels allows for generous streetscape relief.

At the next meeting, the Board would like to see views of the building from multiple angles and from the pedestrian viewpoint. The Board would also like to see shadow studies.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board reviewed several architectural renderings and elevations and continued to appreciate the ground level setback area, as well as the recessed notches on the east and west facades. The Board agreed that the proposed design offers successful massing that is appropriate within the zone designation and changing context.

Architectural Elements

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.

- **Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.**
- **Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.**

The Board noted that the building facades should be well detailed and modulation is important. Treatment of the end walls shown in Option C and the notched areas, as well as significant glazing are desirable treatments to include in the building design. The Board would like to see an architectural design that is cohesive from base to top.

The building detailing responds to the more formal character to the north and more relaxed character to the alley. The Board expressed support for the solid, elegant, well-designed and proportioned building that is cohesive from top to bottom and around all four elevations. The Board also appreciated the significant glazing and vertical notches on both the east and west facades.

C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

The proposed setback at the ground floor and the pairing of the first two floors into a base will contribute to the human scale of the building.

See A-4.

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

The Board stressed that the design should use a material palette that is durable and long-lasting and provides some texture to the building. The Board looks forward to reviewing a more detailed materials and color board.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the material palette included a concrete base with a blue *Ceraclad* fiber cement siding system above, blue and orange toned colored, glass, fritted glass and spandrel glass, vinyl residential windows and perforated metal sunshades, a metal canopy at the entry with wood soffits. The two-story building base is a storefront glass window system. Perforated, metal sun shades are included on the south façade to help solar heat gain. The Board agreed that the *Ceraclad* material shown on the elevations is a desirable, durable material. The Board also concluded that the proposed color scheme provides a nice contrast and textural difference between the materials, specifically that the blue tone is a welcome change from the beige tones often found in new construction.

Pedestrian Environment

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

The Board noted that blank wall, particularly along the alley and at the east and west ends of the building, should be treated to provide visual interest.

At the Final Recommendation meeting , the Board was supportive of the east and west blank wall facade treatment which includes wrapping the blue *Ceraclad* material around the building to these elevations and utilizing a scoring pattern of horizontal lines and a heavier grid pattern overlay.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements away from the street front where possible. Where these elements cannot be located away from street fronts, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

The Board stressed that all of the service elements associated with the proposed development should be located within the proposed structure to provide increased security and discourage loitering. The Board recommended that the service area be located fully within the garage and not be visible from the alley. The Board would like to review these details at the next meeting.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board was pleased that all of the service elements were located within the structure and accessed off the alley. The Board acknowledged that the alley width is narrow and that circulation is tight, but workable based on the information received from the applicant.

- D-7 Pedestrian Safety.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

The Board recommended that the alley design include exterior lighting and other features to create an environment that feels safe and accessible for those properties that abut the alley.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board was supportive of the proposed exterior lighting plan along both the street front and the alley façade, as well the proposed security camera system at the building perimeter – both of which will help create an environment that feels safer and patrolled. Furthermore, the communal dining area and laundry area is located at the second level above the alley, which also promotes views to and from the alley, thereby enhancing safety.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency.** Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

The Board noted that the commercial storefront should include at least ten feet of the glazing at the ground floor.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board was very pleased with the two-story glassy base, which consists of transparent glass and a combination of colored, fritted and spandrel glass creating vertical bays that reinforce the vertical lines of the upper levels. The commercial storefront meets the 13' height requirement.

Landscaping

- E-2 Landscape to Enhance the Building and/or Site.** Landscaping including living plant materials, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

The Board recommended developing a landscape plan that creates variation in the street planting and sidewalk alignment. The public amenity created by the increased open space and the ground level will counteract a reduction in first floor commercial height and depth. The Board stressed that the design focus energy on the pedestrian environment. The existing sidewalk does not include sufficient space for a planting strip that could accommodate street trees. Given this condition, along with the setback area created in Options B and C, the Board expressed support for realigning the sidewalk to create adequate space to accommodate planting areas on both sides of the sidewalk for trees.

The Board would also like to see exploration of vertical landscaping along the alley (from the rooftop downward).

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed the proposed street tree variety and low level plantings and wanted to confirm that the proposed trees and ground plantings would allow clear views between the sidewalk and the street. The Board expressed support for the generous planting strip width of 9'-6" and proposed double allee of trees.

The Board was very supportive of the heavily vegetated area proposed for the entrance area and between the sidewalk and the building facade. The Board recommended, however, that the planting strip design be adjusted to allow for permeability between the sidewalk and the curb to allow pedestrian access.

The Board agreed that the entry area should allow for a small gathering space and recommended the installation of a seat wall is appropriate at the entry area. The Board discussed that the seat wall may be integrated into the landscaping or in front of the entry vestibule.

The Board was pleased with the proposed Virginia Creeper vines to be planted at the building base of the east façade to grow up the concrete building base and helps break up the view of the blank wall.

The Board also recommended that if additional bicycle parking is needed, it should be located within the front setback area. The Board continued to support the re-alignment of the sidewalk to allow for generous plantings on both sides of the sidewalk.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The following three departures from the development standards were proposed at this phase:

Departure Summary Table

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS
PARKING AISLE WIDTH SMC 23.54.030.E	20' – small stalls 22' – medium stalls 24' – large stalls	20' for small stalls 20'-11" for 1 med stall 24' for large stall	The Board voted unanimously in favor of all of the requested departures provided that other measures, such as mirrors and/or other traffic indicators are used to promote safety of vehicles, garbage trucks and pedestrians.
PARKING STALL SIZE RATIO SMC 23.54.030.B2b	Min of 25% of the stalls striped for small vehicles and max. of 65% of the stalls striped for small sized vehicles Min. 35% stalls for large vehicles	61.3% small (8 stalls) 30.8% medium (4 stalls) 7.7% of the stalls for large vehicles (1 stall)	
GARBAGE SERVICE ACCESS WIDTH SMC 23.47A.029.D2b	10' wide	6' for overhead door (room itself is at least 10' wide)	The Board agreed that the proposed modifications are <i>de minimus</i> in scope and are primarily the result of setting back the first floor along the street side. This setting back of the building allowed for the creation of a lushly planted, visually interesting and inviting space for pedestrians, tenants and neighbors alike. This gesture responds to the guidance of multiple guidelines including A-3, A-4, A-5, A-7 and E-2.

All five Board members in attendance unanimously recommended approval of the project and the requested departures with the following recommendations:

1. Architectural details should be integrated at the ground level, that reference the neighborhood history or character. These details should be visible to the pedestrian and provide visual interest. Further exploration of the 'Urness' style of textile design or other Scandinavian/Nordic cultural reference to be incorporated into the design should be considered.

2. The planting strip design should be adjusted to allow for permeability between the sidewalk and the curb to allow pedestrian access
3. The installation of a seat wall at the entry area is recommended. The seat wall may be integrated into the landscaping or in front of the entry vestibule.
4. If additional bicycle parking is needed, it should be located within the front setback area.
5. Mirrors and/or other traffic indicators should be used to promote safety of vehicles, garbage trucks and pedestrians in the garage entrance and internal circulation areas.

The design review process prescribed in Section 23.41.014.F of the Seattle Municipal Code describing the content of the DPD Director's decision reads in part as follows:

The Director's decision shall consider the recommendation of the Design Review Board, provided that, if four (4) members of the Design Review Board are in agreement in their recommendation to the Director, the Director shall issue a decision which incorporates the full substance of the recommendation of the Design Review Board, unless the Director concludes the Design Review Board:

- a. Reflects inconsistent application of the design review guidelines; or*
- b. Exceeds the authority of the Design Review Board; or*
- c. Conflicts with SEPA conditions or other regulatory requirements applicable to the site; or*
- d. Conflicts with the requirements of state or federal law.*

Subject to the above-proposed conditions, the design of the proposed project was found by the Design Review Board to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines.

ANALYSIS & DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

Director's Analysis

All five members of the Northwest Area Design Review Board were in attendance and provided recommendations (listed above) to the Director and identified elements of the Design Guidelines which are critical to the project's overall success. The Director must provide additional analysis of the Board's recommendations and then accept, deny or revise the Board's recommendations (SMC 23.41.014.F3). The Director agrees with and accepts the recommendations offered by the Board that further augment the selected Guidelines.

Following the Recommendation meeting, DPD staff worked with the applicant to update the submitted plans to include the recommendations of the Design Review Board. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made by the five members present at the decision meeting and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings. The Director agrees with the Design Review Board's conclusion that the proposed project and conditions imposed result in a design that best meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines and accepts the recommendations noted by the Board. The Director is satisfied that all of the recommendations imposed by the Design Review Board have been met.

Director's Decision

The design review process is prescribed in Section 23.41.014 of the Seattle Municipal Code. Subject to the above-proposed conditions, the design of the proposed project was found by the Design Review Board to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made by the five members present at the decision meeting, provided additional review and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings. The Design Review Board agreed that the proposed design, along with the recommendations listed, meets each of the Design Guideline Priorities as previously identified. Therefore, the Director accepts the Design Review Board's recommendations and **APPROVES** the proposed design and the requested departures.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The proposal is for 7,760 square feet of commercial space and 80 residential units, thus the application is not exempt from SEPA review. Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Seattle State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated April 14, 2010 and annotated by the Land Use Planner. The information in the checklist, pertinent public comment, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The Department of Planning and Development has analyzed the environmental checklist and submitted by the project applicant and reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file. As indicated in this analysis, this action will result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states, in part, "*Where City regulations have been adopted to address and environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation*" subject to some limitations. Short-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposal. No adverse long-term impacts on the environmentally critical area are anticipated.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected; decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from construction activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. Puget Sound

Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general. Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the City.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B) allow the reviewing agency to mitigate impacts associated with construction activities. Most short-term impacts are expected to be minor. Compliance with the above applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. However, impacts associated with air quality, noise, and construction traffic warrant further discussion.

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from construction activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by drying mud tracked onto streets during construction activities; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction materials hauling, equipment and personnel; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts:

- The applicant estimates approximately 777 cubic yards of excavation for construction. Excess material to be disposed of must be deposited in an approved site.
- The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction.
- The Street Use Ordinance requires watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires, removal of debris, and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way.
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general.
- Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city.

Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment. However, given the amount of building activity to be undertaken in association with the proposed project, additional analysis of grading, traffic, noise and greenhouse gas impacts is warranted.

Earth - Grading

The construction plans will be reviewed by DPD. Any additional information showing conformance with applicable ordinances and codes will be required prior to issuance of building permits. Applicable codes and ordinances provide extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires preparation of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction on sites where grading will involve cuts or fills of greater than three feet in height or grading greater than 100 cubic yards of material. The current proposal involves excavation of approximately 777 cubic yards of material. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used, therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Traffic, Circulation and Parking

Construction activities are expected to affect the surrounding area. Impacts to traffic and roads are expected from truck trips during excavation and construction activities. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B) allows the reviewing agency to mitigate impacts associated with transportation during construction. The construction activities will require the removal of material from site and can be expected to generate truck trips to and from the site. In addition, delivery of concrete and other materials to the site will generate truck trips. As a result of these truck trips, an adverse impact to existing traffic will be introduced to the surrounding street system, which is unmitigated by existing codes and regulations.

During construction, existing City code (SMC 11.62) requires truck activities to use arterial streets to the greatest extent possible. This immediate area is subject to traffic congestion during the PM peak hour, and large construction trucks would further exacerbate the flow of traffic. Pursuant to SMC 25.05.675(B) (Construction Impacts Policy) and SMC 25.05.675(R) (Traffic and Transportation), additional mitigation is warranted.

For the removal and disposal of the spoil materials, the Code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires that a minimum of one foot of “freeboard” (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks which minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed en route to or from a site.

For the duration of the construction activity, the applicant/responsible party shall cause construction truck trips to cease during the hours between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays. This condition will assure that construction truck trips do not interfere with daily PM peak traffic in the vicinity. As conditioned, this impact is sufficiently mitigated in conjunction with enforcement of the provisions of existing City Code (SMC 11.62).

On-street parking in the neighborhood is limited, and the demand for parking by construction workers during construction could exacerbate the demand for on-street parking and result in an adverse impact on surrounding properties. The owner and/or responsible party shall assure that construction vehicles and equipment are parked on the subject site or on a dedicated site within 800 feet for the term of the construction whenever possible. To facilitate these efforts, a Construction Management Plan will be required as a condition of approval identifying construction worker parking and construction materials staging areas; truck access routes to and from the site for excavation and construction phases; and sidewalk and street closures with neighborhood notice and posting procedures.

The Street Use Ordinance requires sweeping or watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires, removal of debris, and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way. This ordinance provides adequate mitigation for these construction transportation impacts; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Noise

All construction activities are subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance. Construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 6pm. Interior work that involves mechanical equipment, including compressors and generators, may be allowed on Saturdays between 9am and 6pm once the shell of the structure is completely enclosed, provided windows and doors remain closed. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Construction activities outside the above-stated restrictions may be authorized upon approval of a Construction Noise Management Plan to address mitigation of noise impacts resulting from all construction activities. The Plan shall include a discussion on management of construction related noise, efforts to mitigate noise impacts and community outreach efforts to allow people within the immediate area of the project to have opportunities to contact the site to express concern about noise. Elements of noise mitigation may be incorporated into any Construction Management Plans required to mitigate any short-term transportation impacts that result from the project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts associated with approval of this proposal include storm water and erosion potential on site. Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically, the Storm water, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on-site detention of storm water with provisions for controlled tight line release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; and the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows. Compliance with all other applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies.

Due to the type, size and location of the proposed project, additional analysis of parking, traffic, height, bulk and scale and greenhouse gas impacts is warranted

Traffic and Transportation

A Trip Generation and Parking Assessment Memorandum for the proposed project was prepared by the Transpo Group, dated September 3, 2010. The report compares the existing trip generation with an estimate of the total amount of new trips to be generated by this project. According to the memo, the proposed development will increase the daily number of trips to the site by an estimate of 11 trips during the AM peak hours and 12 trips during the PM peak hours. These figures include trips associated with the free and accessible Hopelink van. The increase in trips is minimal and is not expected to create any significant adverse impacts.

Parking

The Trip Generation and Parking Assessment Memorandum for the proposed project prepared by the Transpo Group, dated September 3, 2010 also considered the parking demand of the proposed development. Because residents are not anticipated to own personal vehicles, the parking demand would be generated by the commercial uses. Parking generation rates associated with Office (#701) and Medical-Dental Office (#720) from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual (4th Edition) and census data were used to estimate the parking demand associated with the proposed development.

The memo reasonably addresses the key aspects of potential transportation and parking impacts. A minor point is that the adjustments to the parking demand for the Medical-Dental Office component of the project may be too broadly applied. In Table 2, the analysis notes that based on ITE rates, this component would generate a peak parking demand of 5 vehicles. This is reduced by 35% to take account of journey-to-work data for this area from the 2000 Census. This reduction is appropriate to apply to employees but probably not to patients. However, even if no reduction is made to this project component for either patients or employees, the total parking demand would be 13 vehicles (8 for the administrative office space and 5 for the medical-dental office space), which would be accommodated by the proposed 13 on-site spaces. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are created and no further mitigation is needed.

Height, Bulk & Scale

The SEPA Height, Bulk and Scale Policy (25.05.675.G) states that:

" the height, bulk and scale of development projects should be reasonably compatible with the general character of development anticipated by the goals and policies....for the area in which they are located, and to provide for a reasonable transition between areas of less intensive zoning and more intensive zoning."

In addition, the Policy states that:

"A project that is approved pursuant to the Design Review Process shall be presumed to comply with these Height, Bulk and Scale policies. This presumption may be rebutted only by clear and convincing evidence that height, bulk and scale impacts documented through environmental review have not been adequately mitigated."

The subject site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3-85). This zone is developed with a mix of structures sizes and heights with a variety of commercial and residential uses. The building height reaches 75 feet, ten feet below the building height maximum. Moreover, the front setback of the entire building in the proposed design allows for generous landscaping and softens the bulk and mass experience of the streetscape and at the pedestrian level.

The site is being developed to Neighborhood Commercial 3 zone standards, per the Land Use Code, and is thereby in keeping with the scale of development anticipated in the area. The discussion above indicates that there are no significant height, bulk and scale impacts as contemplated in the SEPA policy. In addition, the Design Review Board has approved this project and no evidence was presented suggesting that the height, bulk and scale impacts associated with the proposal were inadequately mitigated by the Design Review process. Therefore, no additional mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts is warranted pursuant to SEPA policy.

Greenhouse Gas

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

DECISION – STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of the Master Use Permit

1. Notice of Income Restrictions. The applicant shall record in the King County Office of Records and Elections a declaration signed and acknowledged by the owner(s), in a form prescribed by the Director, which shall identify the subject property by legal description, and shall acknowledge and provide notice to any prospective purchasers that specific income limits are a condition for maintaining the reduced parking requirement. The recorded document shall be submitted to DPD for review and approval.

Prior to Issuance of any Construction, Shoring or Grading Permits

2. The applicant shall provide to the DPD Land Use Planner for approval a Construction Management Plan which identifies construction worker parking and construction materials staging areas; truck access routes to and from the site for excavation and construction phases; and sidewalk and street closures with neighborhood notice and posting procedures.

During Construction

3. The hours of construction activity shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays (except that grading, delivery and pouring of cement and similar noisy activities shall be prohibited on Saturdays). This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.
4. For the duration of the construction activity, the applicant/responsible party shall cause construction truck trips to cease during the hours between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays.

DESIGN REVIEW

Important Design Requirements to be Confirmed Prior to Building Permit Issuance

- a. Architectural details should be integrated at the ground level, that reference the neighborhood history or character. These details should be visible to the pedestrian and provide visual interest. Further exploration of the 'Urness' style of textile design or other Scandinavian/Nordic cultural reference to be incorporated into the design should be considered.

- b. The planting strip design should be adjusted to allow for permeability between the sidewalk and the curb to allow pedestrian access
- c. The installation of a seat wall at the entry area is recommended. The seat wall may be integrated into the landscaping or in front of the entry vestibule.
- d. If additional bicycle parking is needed, it should be located within the front setback area.
- e. Mirrors and/or other traffic indicators should be used to promote safety of vehicles, garbage trucks and pedestrians in the garage entrance and internal circulation areas.

CONDITIONS-DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to Issuance of any Certificate of Occupancy

- 5. The applicants shall arrange for an inspection with the Land Use Planner (Lisa Rutzick, Lisa.Rutzick@Seattle.Gov, (206)-386-9049) to verify that the construction of the buildings with siting, materials, and architectural details is substantially the same as those documented in the approved plans dated July 30, 2010.

Signature: _____
(signature on file)
Lisa Rutzick, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: October 4, 2010